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23 June 81

Memo to: DDS&T Staff.

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Subject: U-2 Program, Early aspects.

1. The U-2 program was initiated in 1955 for the primary purpose of overflying Soviet Russia at high enough operational altitudes as would negate any attempts to fix and destroy the recon aircraft with guided missiles. There were initially three primary technical problems which had to be resolved before the program could be considered operationally-ready. Namely: (1) the design and production of the aircraft, (2) the design and production of the camera which would provide the required degree of resolution at the operational altitudes required i.e. 60,000 ft plus, and (3) the design and production of a partial pressure suit which would allow the pilot to continue flying at the required altitude (safely) after loss of cabin pressurization, due either to enemy action or engine flame-outs.

2. The aircraft problem was given to Kelly Johnson (and his 'skunk-works' crew at Lockheed Air Craft Company in Burbank, CA. The camera problem was assigned to Hycon Mfg. Co., in Pasadena, CA. which was headed by Trevor Gardner who was then detached from the Company serving the USAF as Ass't Sec'y for research and Development. The problem of the pressure suit development was turned over to the writer via discussions with Gardner and Dick Bissell, in his capacity as Chief of Life Sciences R&D in the newly organized Air Forces Research & Development Command then headquartered in the old Sun Bldg in Baltimore, MD. My first contacts with Gardner and Bissell were made through the CG of ARDC who at that time was Don Putt, in July or August 1955.

3. Support, planning and operations were to be shared between the Agency and the Air Force and the site chosen for operational readiness-testing and further training of the pilots was in the

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The overall leader and director of the program was Richard Bissell who established a special project office under the DCI. Early Agency and Air Force personnel involved in the U-2 program, which initially was called "Acquitone" and later "Idealist" were (to the best of my memory) the following:

- deputy to Dick Bissell - May '55

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Ozzie Ritland AF - operations

June '55

Jack Gibbs AF

"

June '56

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led in a/c accident. '55
 Agency security '56

- Agency - ground support [] '55

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- Agency - personnel acquisition from the AF '56

Agency - Admin & finances '56

John Parangosky - Agency - Overseas liason '57
 (arranged the bases at [] in Germany and
 Adana, Turkey: after tour in Germany came back to
 the U-2 program as Agency Ops planner & overseer
 of the engineering efforts.

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4. The design, development and installation of the Hycon (B) camera at Hycon was under the direct control and supervision of a Mr. [] very energetic and ingenious fellow who later on left Hycon and formed his own company in the Los Angeles Area. The results of the camera were extraordinarily successful, considerably exceeding the initial design specs.

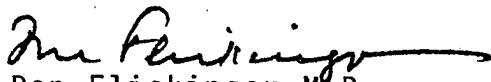
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5. With the permission of the Air Force and the funds of the Agency the writer was able to work directly with the David Clark Company of Worcestire, Mass., and the Aeromedical lab at Wirght- Patterson AFB on the matter of the continuous wear partial pressure suit to be used by the U-2 pilots. At that time the technique required by the partial pressure suits in use by the Air Force gave the pilots about 15-20" get-down-time to a non-pressurized altitude before blacking out from circulatory collapse. This amount of time was obviously no good for the U-2 pilots since in order to allow survival of both the aircraft and the pilot it was vital that the pilot maintain the same high altitude required during the overflight until he could reach a friendly air field. Under usual circumstances it would have taken the Air Force approximately 3-5 years to complete this particular project but under the rules allowed the writer, the first operational pressure suits were readiness-tested, proven and incorporated into the Project in 10 months barely in time to meet the first flight of the original U-2 a/c.

6. Working with the Air Force and the Agency (OMS) the writer drew up the requirements for Pilot selection and initiated the recruitment and selection procedures. The Lovelace Clinic in Albuquerque, N.M. was used for the medical evals and the AeroMed Laboratory in Dayton was used for the physical stress testing procedures. Agency and AF psychologists also assisted in the screening procedures. A small group of Agency and AF personnel made the final selections of the successful pilots and then proceeded with required recruitment processes.

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7. To my best knowledge the following individuals are available more or less locally, and in my personal opinion, would be happy to assist the Agency in reconstructing and reviewing these and other subsequent events of the total U-2 program, If I can be of any assistance in contacting any of these people or otherwise assisting your further efforts in this matter please so advise.



Don Flickinger M.D.
Consultant, Aerospace Medicine.

Richard Bissell - Office and Secretary in Farmington, Conn.

James Cunningham - Home office in Bethesda, Md.

John Parangosky - Home in Annandale, VA.

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